Statistical Bulletin

METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

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Large Population Gain in 1953

THE population of the United States increased 2,700,000 during 1953, bringing the total, including the armed forces overseas, to about 161,200,000 at the year's end. This large increment, exceeding somewhat the previous high gain registered in 1952, reflected not only a record-breaking number of births, but also a low death rate and a moderate increase from immigration.

The new high record for births was not far short of the 4 million mark. The actual number, including an allowance for unregistered births, was more than 3,950,000, or nearly 25 per 1,000 population. The births in 1953 were nearly 2 percent greater than in the preceding year and more than 50 percent higher than in 1940. The year just ended was the seventh in succession in which births exceeded 3½ millions. In the past decade, the number of babies born reached the remarkable total of more than 35 million.

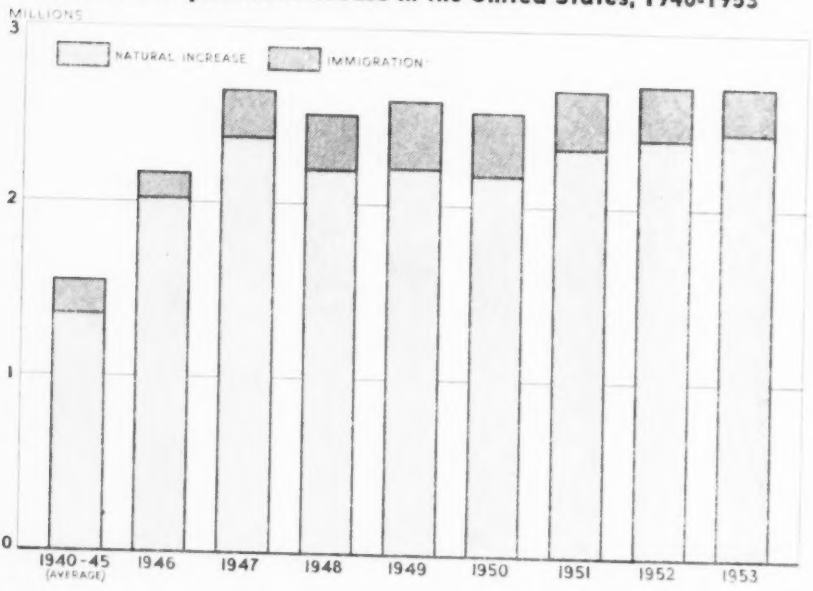
The Southwest and the Rocky Mountain areas experienced the largest relative rise in births in 1953. In other sections of the country, Florida, Delaware, and Missouri showed increases well above the national average.

Infant mortality declined in 1953, establishing a new low estimated at 28 per 1,000 live births, or slightly below the previous minimum recorded the year before. The infant mortality rate in the year just ended represented a decline of 30 percent from that a decade ago and of more than 50 percent from that two decades ago.

The general mortality in the United States was also at a low level. The 1953 death rate was 9.6 per 1,000, or about the same as in the preceding year, which established a new minimum. This record is especially impressive because 1953 was marked by an outbreak of respiratory disease early in the year and a severe hot spell in late summer, both of which brought a rise in mortality over the seasonal normal. The death rates at ages up to 55 were as low as or lower than those in any past year. When the final figures are in hand, and allowance is made for the increase in proportion of older people, the adjusted death rate for all ages combined may set a new low record.

The natural increase in population —the excess of births over deaths— reached a new high of about 2,425,000 in 1953. This was somewhat above the previous maximum re-

Annual Population Increase in the United States, 1940-1953



corded the year before, and more than double the annual increase during the 1930's.

The rapid rate of population growth which began in 1946 has now continued for eight consecutive years. As the chart above shows, the annual gain in population exceeded 2½ millions in all but one of these years. During this eight-year period, the population grew by more than 20 millions; just prior to 1946, it took 17 years to produce such an increase. The magnitude of the recent population gain in our country can be better appreciated when one realizes that it exceeds by more than one third the present population of Canada.

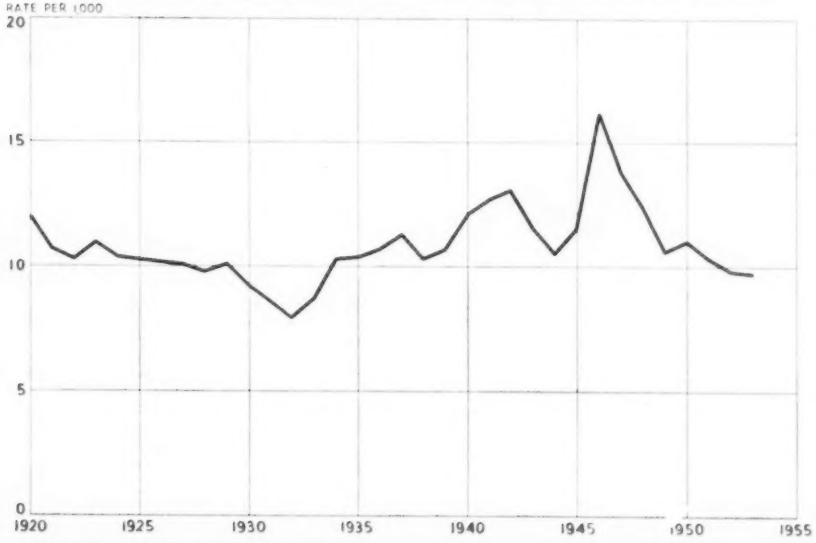
Every age group has contributed to the growth in population, with preschool children showing the largest gain. Thus, as against a rise of one fifth in the total population since 1940, the number of children under 5 has increased by about two thirds. These youngsters now constitute 11 percent of the population, compared with 8 percent in 1940. At the same time, the elders in our country have also grown rapidly both in number and in proportion to the total. Since 1940, the people at ages 65 and over have increased by nearly 50 percent and now comprise about 13½ millions, or more than 8 percent of the population. Those at the main working ages of life have also experienced a substantial increase in numbers although they have decreased slightly as a proportion of the total population.

Marriage Rate Down Slightly in 1953

ABOUT 1,553,000 marriages took place in the United States during 1953. Although this was 20,000 more than the number in the preceding year, the marriage *rate* fell off slightly. In 1953, the rate was 9.7 per 1,000 population (including the armed forces overseas), compared with 9.8 per 1,000 in 1952. In both years, it was about two fifths below the level for 1946, when the rate rose sharply to the all-time high of 16.2 per 1,000.

The recent marriage rate is substantially above that of the early 1930's, even though it is at the lowest point in two decades, as may be seen from the accompanying chart. The reasons for the falling off in marriages in the two periods are quite different, however. At the beginning of the 1930's, unemployment and economic depression discouraged men and women from undertaking the responsibilities of family life. During the past few years, when business conditions have been remarkably good, the marriage rate has been relatively low because the number of single persons was depleted by the marriage boom immediately after World War II. In 1946 alone there were about 2,291,000 marriages in our country, and the total was not much below two million in each of the two years following. Another factor contributing to keep the current rate down is the

Marriages per 1,000 Population*, United States, 1920-1953



*Population includes armed forces overseas.

Source of basic data: Number of marriages, 1920-1951, from the National Office of Vital Statistics; 1952 and 1953, from the Statistical Bureau, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

smaller number of people "coming of age," as a result of the decline in births during the 1930's.

In most areas of the United States the number of marriages in 1953 showed relatively little change from the preceding year. Several States, however, experienced substantial changes, as is evident from the table below. The number of marriages increased by about one sixth in Missouri and Delaware, and by more than one tenth in five other States—Vermont, North Dakota, Georgia, Oklahoma, and Nevada.

On the other hand, 14 States and the District of Columbia reported fewer marriages in 1953 than in the

NUMBER OF MARRIAGES IN 1952, AND PERCENT CHANGE 1952 TO 1953
UNITED STATES BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER IN 1952	PERCENT CHANGE 1952 TO 1953*	GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER IN 1952	PERCENT CHANGE 1952 TO 1953*
UNITED STATES	1,533,000	+ 1.4	South Atlantic—Continued		
New England	80,210	+ 1.5	Virginia	37,049	+ 2.2
Maine	8,079	+ 9.9	West Virginia	15,567	− 1.0
New Hampshire	7,184	− 3.2	North Carolina	26,564	+ 3.6
Vermont	3,237	+14.1	South Carolina	46,122	− 0.4
Massachusetts	37,441	− 1.6	Georgia	47,412	+11.3
Rhode Island	6,592	− 1.3	Florida	26,924	+ 0.4
Connecticut	17,677	+ 5.2			
			East South Central	125,672	+ 3.3
Middle Atlantic	243,793	+ 0.4	Kentucky	25,311	− 4.1
New York	123,722	+ 2.1	Tennessee	21,854	+ 2.4
New Jersey	41,125	+ 1.6	Alabama	20,391	− 1.0
Pennsylvania	78,946	− 3.0	Mississippi	58,116	+ 8.5
East North Central	279,812	+ 4.8	West South Central	184,886	−11.1
Ohio	60,922	+ 3.8	Arkansas	53,059	−42.8
Indiana	61,881	+ 6.9	Louisiana	21,235	+ 0.2
Illinois	81,785	+ 2.4	Oklahoma	21,083	+10.9
Michigan	50,487	+ 7.8	Texas	89,009	− 0.2
Wisconsin	24,737	+ 4.4			
			Mountain	129,737	+ 4.6
West North Central	113,332	+ 7.2	Montana	6,410	+ 3.8
Minnesota	24,595	+ 1.9	Idaho	8,120	+ 9.0
Iowa	22,600	+ 3.6	Wyoming	3,183	− 2.6
Missouri	28,373	+17.3	Colorado	12,594	− 2.3
North Dakota	4,078	+11.7	New Mexico	22,438	− 0.3
South Dakota	5,965	+ 1.1	Arizona	22,219	0.0
Nebraska	11,484	+ 0.4	Utah	6,732	+ 6.0
Kansas	16,237	+ 9.1	Nevada	48,021	+10.5
South Atlantic	256,628	+ 2.6	Pacific	119,439	+ 0.7
Delaware	2,454	+16.6	Washington	30,599	− 3.9
Maryland	45,049	+ 0.3	Oregon	9,998	+ 5.6
District of Columbia	9,487	− 5.6	California	78,833	+ 1.9

*January through October of each year.

Note: Data are provisional.

Source of basic data: Reports by the National Office of Vital Statistics and surveys by the Statistical Bureau, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

year before. In all but one of these—Arkansas—the decreases were less than 6 percent. In Arkansas, however, marriages fell off more than two fifths, due to the enactment of legislation requiring a premarital serological test. That State had been registering a steady decline in marriages during the early months of 1953, but the downswing was greatly accelerated after July 1st when the new law became effective. It is likely that many marriages which would previously have taken place in Arkansas are now occurring in adjacent States. No doubt, this shift accounts in considerable measure for the upswing in marriages experienced by Missouri, Mississippi, and Oklahoma.

In a majority of the leading cities, the number of marriages changed but little from that of the preceding year. In cities with at least 100,000 population, as a group, there were 1.3 percent more marriages in the first 10 months of 1953 than in the corresponding period of 1952. Fifty-six, or somewhat more than one half of these urban areas recorded increases; in 47 there were decreases. Only one large city—Birmingham, Ala.—reported a decline of more than 10 percent. By contrast, five cities reported increases of this magnitude—namely, Tulsa, Okla. (17 percent), Kansas City, Mo. (16 percent), Flint, Mich. (14 percent), Little Rock, Ark. (13 percent), and Memphis, Tenn. (11 percent). The upswing in marriages in Little Rock is particularly noteworthy, in view of the marked decline in the rest of the State.

In four of our five cities with populations exceeding 1,000,000, the rise in marriages from 1952 to 1953 was somewhat larger than that for the country as a whole. In the fifth, New York City, the number of marriages was practically at the same level in the two years.

Fatal Accidents Decrease in 1953

IN 1953, for the first time in four years, the number of deaths from accidents in the United States showed a decrease. Approximately 94,000 lives were lost in mishaps during the year, about 2,000 fewer than in 1952. While this improvement is encouraging, there is little comfort in the continued heavy toll of life taken by accidents among the American people; only the cardiovascular diseases and cancer are responsible for a greater number of deaths.

Motor vehicles caused approximately 38,000 fatalities in 1953, not appreciably different from the number in 1952. The toll in each of the past three years has not been much below the all-time high established in 1941, when 40,000 lives were lost in such accidents. In 1953, as in other recent years, motor vehicle mishaps were by far the leading cause of fatal injury, accounting for about two fifths of all accidental deaths. This sustained high level of mortality is disturbing, even though pre-

ACCIDENTS TAKING 25 OR MORE LIVES, IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE
UNITED STATES, 1951-1953

DATE	PLACE	TYPE OF ACCIDENT	NUMBER OF LIVES LOST
1953			
June 8	Michigan and Ohio	Series of tornadoes	142*
May 11	Waco, Texas	Tornado	114
June 9	Worcester County, Mass.	Tornado	88
February 15	Southeast of Mobile, Ala.	Scheduled passenger plane crash	46
July 18	Near Pensacola, Fla.	Military plane crash	44
January 7	Utah Idaho border	Crash of transport plane, chartered by Army	40
December 5	Vicksburg, Miss.	Tornado	38
October 16	Boston, Mass.	Explosion and fire on aircraft carrier	37
March 20	Near Oakland, Calif.	Crash of transport plane leased by Air Force	35
April 16	Chicago, Ill.	Explosion and fire in electrical appliance factory	35
March 29	Largo, Fla.	Nursing home destroyed by fire	33
September 16	Near Albany, N. Y.	Scheduled passenger plane crash	28
1952			
March 21-22	Mississippi Valley States	Series of tornadoes	229
December 20	Near Moses Lake, Wash.	Military plane crash	87
November 28	Tacoma, Wash.	Military plane crash	37
February 11	Elizabeth, N. J.	Scheduled passenger plane crashed into residential area	33
January 22	Elizabeth, N. J.	Scheduled passenger plane crashed into residential area	30
April 18	Near Los Angeles, Calif.	Nonscheduled passenger plane crash	29
August 4	Near Waco, Texas	Collision of two buses	28
1951			
December 21	West Frankfort, Ill.	Coal mine explosion	119
February 6	Woodbridge, N. J.	Passenger train derailed on temporary bridge section	85
December 16	Elizabeth, N. J.	Nonscheduled passenger plane, in flames, crashed into Elizabeth River, N. J.	56
June 30	60 miles from Denver, Colo.	Transport plane crashed on mountain slope	50
August 24	Near Oakland, Calif.	Transport plane crashed near top of hill	50
September 1	Off Montauk Point, Long Island, N. Y.	Fishing-party boat capsized	45
April 25	Over Key West, Fla.	Collision of Cuban airliner and United States Naval plane	43
Mid July	Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma	Floods	41
Late October	Atlanta, Ga.	Poisoning due to "liquor"—mostly wood alcohol	41
December 30	Central Arizona	Air Force transport plane crashed on mountain	28
December 29	Near Salamanca, N. Y.	Nonscheduled passenger plane crashed in a forest	26

*116 lives lost in Flint area.

liminary data indicate that the death rate computed on the basis of motor vehicle mileage may have dropped to a new minimum.

A reduction in fatal injuries in and about the home accounts very largely for the decrease in the total number of deaths from accidents in

1953. About 27,500 lives were lost in home accidents during the year, some 1,500 fewer than in the preceding year. Even so, such accidents accounted for about 30 percent of all deaths from mishaps. Public accidents other than those involving motor vehicles accounted for approximately 16,000 deaths in 1953, a small improvement from the year before. Injuries arising out of or in the course of employment took about 15,000 lives, virtually the same number as in 1952.

Catastrophes—accidents in which five or more persons are killed—accounted for more deaths in 1953 than in 1952, according to records compiled from a variety of sources by the Statistical Bureau of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. These accidents took approximately 1,800 lives in 1953, making this the highest toll since 1947. The unusually large loss of life from tornadoes, particularly in the first half of the year, was a major factor in the rise. Thirteen tornadoes killed more than 450 persons during 1953. Four of the storms, sweeping through well-populated areas, were responsible for most of the deaths. The first of these struck Waco, Texas, on May 11th, taking 114 lives. The second and largest was a series of tornadoes which swept through Michigan and Ohio on June 8th and killed 142 persons, mostly in the Flint area. On the following day, a third storm cut through Worcester County, Mass., fatally injuring 88 people. A fourth twister roared through Vicksburg, Miss., on December 5th, leaving a death toll of 38.

Natural disasters thus accounted for more than one quarter of all the lives lost in catastrophes during the year. Motor vehicle injuries ranked second in this respect, contributing about one fifth of the total. Somewhat smaller proportions were due to fires and explosions and to civilian air transportation. Major accidents in military flying were responsible for about one tenth of the deaths sustained in catastrophes.

There were 12 catastrophes in 1953, each of which took more than 25 lives. Five of these major accidents involved aircraft and caused the death of 193 persons. A total of 105 lost their lives in three major fires and explosions. The details for each of these major accidents, and for those in the two preceding years, are listed in the table on page 6.

More Families with Dependent Children

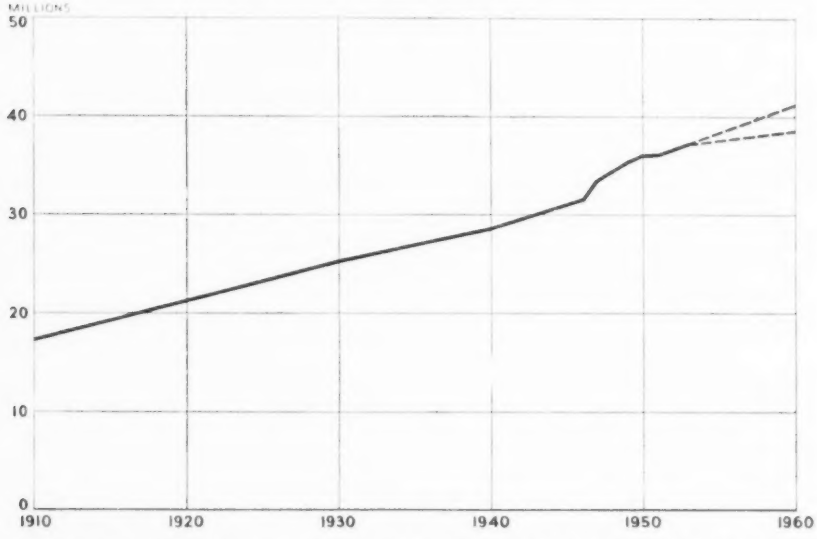
THE number of married couples in our country has been increasing rapidly since the end of World War II, reaching an all-time high of 37,100,000 in April 1953. This represents a gain of about 5½ million in seven years, or close to one and two thirds times the increase during the entire decade of the 1930's. Moreover, the rise is likely to continue, as is indicated in the chart on page 8. According to forecasts by the Bureau of the Census, there may be as many as 41¼ mil-

lion married couples in the United States by 1960.

Although the number of married couples has increased at every period of life, the gain varied appreciably according to the age of the husband; a comparison of 1940 and 1952 is shown in Table 1. In families where the husband is under 30 years of age the rise was nearly one third, and where he is between ages 30 and 45 it was at least one quarter. The figures just cited relate to all couples, whether they have dependent children or not. For young husbands with children the relative rise was even greater during this 12-year period, amounting to 45 percent or more where the father is under 35 years of age. These gains reflect the high marriage rates of recent years, as well as the tendency to have children sooner after marriage than in years past. On the other hand, the number of couples past midlife with dependent children decreased between 1940 and 1952, a reflection of the general downward trend in the birth rate during their years of family building.

More than one half of all married couples have at least one child living with them. The proportion is even higher in families with relatively young husbands. There are children in nearly three fifths of the families where the husband is under age 25 and in three fourths of those in which he is between ages 25 and 30. Family responsibility is at a

Number of Married Couples in the United States 1910-1953, High and Low Forecasts for 1960



Source of basic data: Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, Nos. 17, 42, and 48.

TABLE 1—MARRIED COUPLES BY AGE OF FAMILY HEAD
UNITED STATES, 1952 AND 1940

AGE OF FAMILY HEAD	TOTAL MARRIED COUPLES			MARRIED COUPLES WITH CHILDREN*		
	NUMBER, IN THOUSANDS		PERCENT CHANGE	NUMBER, IN THOUSANDS		PERCENT CHANGE
	1952	1940†		1952	1940†	
All Ages	36,510	28,517	+28.0	20,170	16,559	+21.8
Under 25	2,004	1,506	+33.1	1,154	744	+55.1
25 to 29	4,218	3,223	+30.9	3,166	2,080	+52.2
30 to 34	4,774	3,719	+28.4	3,944	2,725	+44.7
35 to 44	8,922	7,165	+24.5	7,054	5,457	+29.3
45 to 54	7,060	6,246	+13.0	3,572	3,702	− 3.5
55 to 64	5,518	4,019	+37.3	1,128	1,399	−19.4
65 and over	4,014	2,639	+52.1	152	452	−66.4

*Own children under age 18.

†Includes estimate by Statistical Bureau, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for the 1,911,200 married couples, with and without children, who were not residing in their own household.

Source of basic data: Various reports by the Bureau of the Census.

maximum for husbands between 30 and 45 years of age, when four fifths of them have children in their care. Thereafter, the proportion decreases with advance in the age of the husband because the children attain age 18, or leave the family upon marriage or for other reasons. Nevertheless, family responsibilities are still appreciable even up to the threshold of old age. Thus, in one fifth of families where the husband is in the age group 55-64, there are still one or more children who have not yet reached their 18th birthday.

The heads of many broken or temporarily disrupted families, no less than the heads of husband-wife families, bear responsibility for dependent children. In 1952, this was the case in one quarter of the 1,312,000 broken or disrupted families headed by a male breadwinner, and in nearly one half of the 4,654,000 families with a woman at the head. These women usually carry a heavy burden. More than 90 percent of those under 35 years of age who were heads of families in 1952 had young children in their care; at ages 35-44 years more than three fourths were so situated. Even at ages 55-64 one in every 10 women heading a family had at least one child under age 18 living with her. The details are shown in Table 2 on the next page.

In a considerable proportion of families with a young mother at the head, the husband was serving with

TABLE 2—MARRIED COUPLES AND OTHER FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN* BY AGE OF FAMILY HEAD. UNITED STATES, 1952

AGE OF FAMILY HEAD	NUMBER WITH CHILDREN, IN THOUSANDS			PERCENT WITH CHILDREN		
	MARRIED COUPLES	OTHER FAMILIES WITH MALE HEAD	FAMILIES WITH FEMALE HEAD	MARRIED COUPLES	OTHER FAMILIES WITH MALE HEAD	FAMILIES WITH FEMALE HEAD
All Ages	20,170	328	2,132	55.2	25.0	45.8
Under 25	1,154	12	318	57.6	20.7	94.1
25 to 29	3,166	32	348	75.1	45.7	91.1
30 to 34	3,944	42	332	82.6	47.7	90.2
35 to 44	7,054	90	696	79.1	38.8	76.7
45 to 54	3,572	56	352	50.6	23.0	38.3
55 to 64	1,128	70	80	20.4	25.9	10.2
65 and over	152	26	6	3.8	7.4	.6

*Own children under age 18.

Source: Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 44.

the armed forces. At the middle and later ages broken families reflect the effects of marital discord and, even more, the effects of mortality. Too frequently, the premature dissolution of families by death leaves widows with the problems of providing for and raising dependent children.

In the light of these facts, it is fortunate that Life insurance and other forms of thrift are so widespread in our country. At the end of 1953, about 90 million policyholders in the United States owned more than three hundred billion dollars of Life insurance in private companies.

DEATH RATES* PER 100,000 POLICYHOLDERS FROM SELECTED CAUSES
INDUSTRIAL PREMIUM-PAYING BUSINESS, WEEKLY AND MONTHLY COMBINED
METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

NOVEMBER 1953

CAUSE OF DEATH	ANNUAL RATE* PER 100,000 POLICYHOLDERS				
	NOVEMBER		YEAR-TO-DATE		
	1953	1952	1953	1952	1951
All Causes—total	611.0	645.4	649.6	650.6	648.5
Tuberculosis (all forms)	8.3	10.5	10.0	13.9	17.6
Tuberculosis of respiratory system	7.4	9.8	9.0	12.6	16.0
Syphilis	2.3	2.9	2.5	2.8	3.7
Communicable diseases of childhood	.1	.1	.3	.5	.5
Acute poliomyelitis	1.2	2.3	1.0	1.5	.8
Malignant neoplasms	119.9	122.0	122.1	122.4	120.8
Digestive system	43.5	45.8	43.3	46.5	46.6
Respiratory system	15.5	16.4	14.9	14.2	13.7
Diabetes mellitus	13.6	14.5	15.2	14.0	14.8
Diseases of the cardiovascular-renal system	304.0	329.0	325.5	330.4	328.9
Vascular lesions, central nervous system	58.4	65.1	64.4	67.1	64.4
Diseases of heart	224.3	239.7	239.4	239.6	239.9
Chronic rheumatic heart disease	13.3	11.2	12.6	12.9	13.4
Arteriosclerotic and degenerative heart disease	169.2	175.4	178.4	174.5	174.2
Hypertension with heart disease	33.2	42.8	39.0	42.0	41.9
Other diseases of heart	8.6	10.3	9.4	10.2	10.4
Hypertension without mention of heart	5.6	6.9	5.6	6.0	6.2
General arteriosclerosis	5.8	5.7	6.0	6.3	6.1
Nephritis and nephrosis	9.9	11.6	10.1	11.4	12.3
Pneumonia	9.9	14.4	14.8	15.3	15.6
Influenza	.9	1.4	2.7	1.9	2.6
Ulcers of stomach and duodenum	4.1	4.7	4.6	4.5	4.4
Appendicitis	1.5	.9	1.3	1.6	1.5
Hernia and intestinal obstruction	3.8	2.7	3.8	3.5	4.1
Gastritis, duodenitis, enteritis, etc.	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.8	2.5
Cirrhosis of liver	8.9	9.9	9.6	9.7	9.0
Complications of pregnancy, childbirth	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.5
Suicide	5.8	5.4	5.5	5.7	6.2
Homicide	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.8	2.5
Accidents—total	38.2	39.8	38.6	41.2	38.5
Motor vehicle	16.2	20.3	15.4	16.2	15.3
Home	7.4	6.7	6.6	7.0	6.9
Occupational (civilian)	3.2	5.1	3.3	3.7	3.6
War deaths—enemy action	.8	5.9	1.9	2.9	6.3
All other causes	82.0	73.3	83.9	72.1	66.5

*The rates for 1953 are provisional.

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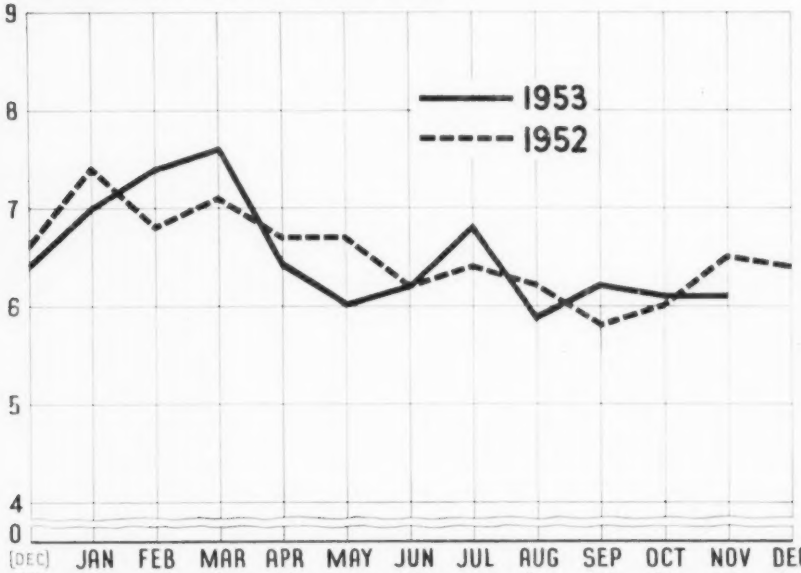
MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES

METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY • INDUSTRIAL PREMIUM-PAYING BUSINESS
WEEKLY AND MONTHLY COMBINED

DEATH RATES PER 1,000 POLICYHOLDERS • ANNUAL BASIS



(DEC)	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1952	7.4	6.8	7.1	6.7	6.7	6.2	6.4	6.2	5.8	6.0	6.5	6.4
1953	7.0	7.4	7.6	6.4	6.0	6.2	6.8	5.9	6.2	6.1	6.1	

1953 figures are provisional

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